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The Cost of Our National Government: A Study in Political Pathology. By HENRY JONES FORD, Professor of Politics in Princeton University. (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1910. Pp. xv, 1-143.)

To persons interested in the cause of good government, the most encouraging indication that actual progress is being made is the increased attention that is being given to the practical problems of governmental organization and administration. The period when political science concerned itself almost exclusively with questions relating to the political character and constitution of public bodies, happily, has passed. Intense activity is now being manifested in all matters having to do with the actual administration of governmental affairs. Here, too, fortunately, the stage of general discussion is behind us, and the most important work that is being done concerns itself with the concrete specialized problems. It is only necessary to refer to such important undertakings as those conducted by the Bureaus of Municipal Research, the Merriam Commission in Chicago, the Boston Finance Commission, and the Pittsburg Civic Commission, to demonstrate how important a place these questions now occupy in the general program of governmental reform. In this significant movement, the National Government now occupies a prominent place through the great personal interest which President Taft has shown in the matter of reducing the expenses of the Federal Government, and putting the conduct of its affairs upon a more efficient basis. Through his initiative the Congress has voted an appropriation of \$100,000 to be expended under his direction in carrying through the necessary investigations into the business methods of the Government and the inauguration of reforms in such methods where found to be desirable. This work is now being prosecuted through a central bureau of economy and efficiency created for that purpose and special committees that have been created by his order in each of the executive departments.

The foregoing is stated for the purpose of showing how peculiarly timely is this study which Professor Ford has given us of the cost of our National Government. It often happens that the secondary title of a book is more illuminative of its real character than its primary title. This is true of the present work. The author has not contented himself with giving a mere descriptive or statistical account of the cost of running the Federal Government. Instead he has given us a real study in political science, by examining in a scholarly way the fundamental

causes responsible for the great increase in Federal expenditures which has been such a prominent feature of our national life during recent years.

The problem of the cost of government has two phases which may be described by the two words used by the President in organizing his inquiry—economy and efficiency. It is perfectly evident that waste and loss may result, on the one hand, by expenditures being authorized which are unwise or unnecessary, and, on the other hand, by a failure to expend the money authorized in the most efficient and economical manner. This distinction is fundamental; and, though clear, it needs to be emphasized, since there is a too-strong popular impression that the administrative machine at Washington is an exceedingly wasteful organization, one which is insatiable in its demands for money and expending in a very inefficient way that which it does receive. This is hardly a correct picture. It is not contended for a moment that great room for improvement does not exist in these respects, but neither is the executive service of the Federal Government more unreasonable in its requests for appropriations than the administrative services of the states and cities, nor is it primarily responsible for the great increase in the expenditures of the National Government that has taken place in recent years.

It is the great merit of Professor Ford's work that he has centered his attention on the Congress itself and has thus gone to the very seat of the evil of extravagance and wastefulness. It is the ill-advised expenditures for public works, public buildings, special pensions, unnecessary ship-yards or naval stations, pension agencies, and the like, most of which, instead of being petitioned for, are actually opposed by the administration, that are responsible for national expenditures exceeding legitimate bounds. The author makes no new discovery in pointing this out, nor presents any novel explanation of its occurrence in calling attention to the extent to which these appropriations are secured through the vicious practices of log-rolling and the pork barrel. What he does deserve credit for, however, is that he has not stopped at this point, but has pushed his inquiries further in the attempt to determine why such practices should develop and prove so difficult of eradication. This he finds in those most characteristic features of our governmental system:—the supposed desirability of keeping separate the legislative and executive functions of government and the absence of a responsible cabinet. The fundamental cause of the evil is that, with us, the administration is not responsible for appropriations. On the contrary, its

wishes are continually disregarded by the Congress; and the demands of the President for economy too often fall on deaf ears. "Under the English constitutional system no appropriations can be voted unless the administration accept responsibility for it by a specific recommendation."

In developing this and other features affecting the matter of expenditures, Professor Ford has entered into the details of the workings of our governmental machinery and particularly the manner in, and conditions under, which the Congress acts in voting money. His study is thus one of value to all students of political science whether or not they are specially interested in the particular problems under discussion. The book represents the putting into print of the series of lectures delivered by the author in 1909 in the Columbia University under the George Blumenthal Foundation.

W. F. WILLOUGHBY.

Government Ownership of Railways: Considered as the Next Great Step in American Progress. By ANTHONY VAN WAGENEN.
(New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910. Pp. 255.)

The present work does not pretend to be an exhaustive or scientific treatise. It was written for the purpose of stimulating interest in a subject which the author thinks must soon become a vital question in the United States. Hence it is a popular treatise, in the sense that it is intended to give a sketch of the subject which shall be within the comprehension of the general reader, a presentation of an important and very complex question in such a form that "the busy man may be able to read it restfully."

But while it would not be fair, in view of the purpose of the book, to criticize it for not sounding more deeply the difficulties of the situation, we must insist that no work, however professedly popular, which deals with problems of government can be excused from the duty of giving due emphasis to the importance of the difficulties they present, however briefly these difficulties be disposed of. Perhaps this proper placing of emphasis is all the more necessary in a popular treatise than in a scientific one, for in the latter the reader is able to form an opinion for himself from a consideration of the facts. It is certainly so, when the subject concerns a problem which is both technical and complex in character, and entirely out of the field of *a priori*; or *a pari* reasoning.